

**CITY OF REDMOND  
DESIGN REVIEW BOARD  
May 7, 2015**

NOTE: These minutes are not a full transcription of the meeting. Tapes are available for public review in the Redmond Planning Department.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joe Palmquist, Craig Krueger, Kevin Sutton

**EXCUSED ABSENCE:** David Scott Meade, Mike Nichols, Scott Waggoner

**STAFF PRESENT:** Dennis Lisk, Senior Planner; Steve Fischer, Manager;  
Kim Dietz, Senior Planner; Sarah Stiteler, Senior Planner

**RECORDING SECRETARY:** Susan Trapp *with* Lady of Letters, Inc.

The Design Review Board is appointed by the City Council to make decisions on design issues regarding site planning, building elevations, landscaping, lighting and signage. Decisions are based on the design criteria set forth in the Redmond Development Guide.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Design Review Board meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Joe Palmquist at 7:03 p.m.

**DISCUSSION**

**Topic:** Historic Core Plan – Design Standard Concepts

**Description:** Discussion regarding pedestrian experience, Sign Code, and Gilman Streetscape

**Staff Contacts:** Kim Dietz, 425-556-2415 or [kdietz@redmond.gov](mailto:kdietz@redmond.gov)  
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Ms. Dietz noted that this was the third portion of the Historic Core Design Standard consultation. She said tonight's meeting would focus on the sequential pedestrian experience and potential Sign Code amendments. She reviewed the dimensions of the Historic Core, from 76<sup>th</sup> to 80<sup>th</sup> Streets and from 162<sup>nd</sup> to 164<sup>th</sup>, with Leary Way as the center corridor. She said she would again use the recommendations provided to the City by the Makers consulting group for each of the topics, show some examples from other cities, and then move into draft Code concepts for Redmond.

The sequential pedestrian experience deals with the concept of creating a great pedestrian experience through architecture and design. The Elan Building, the Cleveland, and Red 160 are three buildings in the area with brick facades. Makers pointed out that pedestrians often see entrances oriented to the corner of the building and architectural and design elements can call those entrances out. Facades facing the street have modulation about every 40 feet, which is consistent with what a historic lot width would have been. That is still seen today along Leary Way. The maximum width of a building is generally 120 feet. That length also reflects the depth of a historic lot. That is the nature of the blocks Redmond has in place today. The Code encourages the use of potted plants, flowers, and street trees. An older kind of lighting is used in the Historic Core, following the Old Town standard, and it is oriented towards the pedestrian scale.

Makers is asking the City to consider engaging a pedestrian at a certain interval. The basic interval for modulation is at a 15-20 foot range. This means, at a casual pace, a pedestrian would be engaged visually every four to six seconds. At the middle level, there is modulation every 100-200 feet or 20 to 40 seconds. This would involve elements that would actually draw the attention of the pedestrian. The most prominent engagement would happen at the corners of buildings. These would serve as gateways into the Historic Core.

Other cities have this style in place in different varieties. Boise has a historic lot width of 50 feet. Public art is a requirement in Boise, and that is to be provided on the building or inside it. Glazing allows pedestrian to see inside a building to see that art, such as in a lobby. Redwood City, California categorizes its streets

for different uses. A particular street might be oriented towards high pedestrian use and therefore, there might be certain uses along that street. Redwood City, in its code, then suggests different types of engagement points for pedestrians. Along a retail street, for example, there would be frequent entrances into stores. Awnings are another example of an engagement point.

Staff has provided draft Code that says every 15-30 feet could be an approach for a slight pedestrian experience, and then, from 100-150 feet, there would be mid-level suggestions for different architectural elements such as distinctive columns and pilasters. Historic interpretation or artistic elements could be applied to a building or placed in a plaza. At 200 feet, there would be significant elements like ornamental pieces or sculpture within the structures themselves. Ms. Dietz would like the DRB's input as to whether the intervals are appropriate, if other treatments should be included to ensure variety and flexibility, and if the block corner is a good way to achieve quality of design and innovation.

Mr. Krueger said the intervals work well and he would like to see them set up as a guideline. He did not want any design standards mandated every 15 feet, however. He would like to encourage creativity with applicants, and said a lot of applicants are providing good corner designs right now. Mr. Krueger would like applicants to talk about how they would enhance the pedestrian experience without mandating certain elements like a column or a low wall. Mr. Krueger confirmed that the block size in this part of Redmond is about 200 feet.

Robert O'Hara, from the Redmond Planning Commission, spoke to the DRB at this point. He said the focus should be on the larger buildings that buy up several lots, aggregate them, and build something big. He did not want a lot of monolithic structures downtown. He supported Mr. Krueger's idea to create a design checklist of sorts rather than mandates.

Mr. Sutton said he was concerned about the spacing on some of these design ideas, especially on a single lot. He appreciated the idea of having well designed corners, but was inclined to remove some of the dimensional suggestions made by staff. Mr. Palmquist asked if Makers looked at any of the factors that would govern these designs absent the Code language. He asked if Makers studied what applicants have been doing without Code language like this in place. Ms. Dietz said Makers did review the built environment and the City's Code, and found an opportunity to enhance the pedestrian experience. Ms. Dietz said even adding the intent of improving that experience could take the Code to a whole new level. Mr. Palmquist said that any time numbers are put down in the Code, similar designs are created for buildings and all the buildings look the same. He said this was a struggle for many cities. He wanted make sure the City encouraged variety in its design.

Mr. Palmquist encouraged having some Code language that would allow designers to have some flexibility in meeting the design intent. Then, the DRB, Planning Commission, or other boards could review those designs and allow for projects that have excellent designs but perhaps do not meet the letter of the law. He realized this would create some ambiguity in the Code, but he wanted to make sure that if someone came in with a superior design, some flexibility would be allowed for that. He was concerned that poor design would find loopholes in the Code, and noted that City Council has had similar concerns over the past few years. Ms. Dietz noted that Makers recommended that the Code text should have a lot of photos along with a clear intent statement, including good and bad examples. Also, some language regarding flexibility would be included.

Ms. Dietz moved next into how art, vegetation, and non-structural elements engage pedestrians along a building's base. She showed the DRB some good and bad examples of these ideas through photos, and asked if these would be appropriate to include in the Code. Mr. O'Hara asked if recommendations would be connected to those pictures. Ms. Dietz said that would be the intent, and designs in certain cities and photographers would be credited. Mr. Palmquist said the suggestions of additional items would be fine, but once again, he would like a broad list of suggestions for designers to choose from to meet the interval requirements referred to earlier. The hope would be to give designers as much freedom as possible to encourage different designs on each block of the Historic Core.

Mr. Krueger said a balance needed to be struck between wanting a pedestrian experience and requiring that in the Code. He wanted to make sure the Code did not encourage the creation of a vanilla design, and recommended using language saying that designers “shall include elements that capture the pedestrian’s attention.” He would like designers to show the DRB how that would be achieved without the City telling them how that would happen. He would like to make sure the DRB was authorized to give designers some direction. Mr. Sutton said it would be important to pick the right photos for the Code. On one example, it appeared some art was tacked on the wall of a solid building, which he did not want to encourage. Ms. Dietz agreed with that criticism. Mr. Palmquist said, however, in the case of a blank wall, art could be an appropriate answer. He wanted to make sure the DRB had some power to make design suggestions to applicants without strict design requirements.

Ms. Dietz moved on to the Sign Code and its impact on the Historic Core. The Code language contains a “should” phrase regarding signs, and she has suggested changing this to a stronger “shall.” Redmond has had success achieving historic character on its landmark buildings through signs. That is most often done by having no internal lighting for signs, but rather, a downward-facing gooseneck light, for example. Preferred signs would be made of wood or wood-like substances. Awnings would be appropriate, as well. Signs hung perpendicular to a building, like a blade sign, would be preferable. Backlit signs and extruded aluminum would not be allowed. Neon signs would be limited to window signs or Art Deco-style buildings.

Other cities have been successful with recommendations such as the ones Ms. Dietz made above. She recommended Code language for the Historic Core that would say signs “shall,” not “should,” be lit from sources other than the signs themselves and backlit plastic signs would not be allowed. Also, neon signs would be prohibited other than the examples noted above. Mr. Sutton said he did not have any issues with these requirements. Mr. Krueger said the suggestions were good. Mr. Palmquist was supportive, but wanted to make sure there was a broad list of options available. He noted that the rotating Redmond Cleaners sign was a unique example of a sign that would not be allowed under this Code. Mr. Palmquist said he had a concern over moving text signs, and those should not be used in the Historic Core. He wanted to make sure there were no restrictions on great designs.

Mr. Tom Hitzroth, Chair of the Landmark Commission, noted that the Redmond Cleaners sign could be designated as a landmark. Mr. Krueger said he had a problem with box signs with internal lights, but said if there was a designer that could make the case for such a sign, some flexibility should be allowed. Mr. O’Hara said changing lighting technology might allow for an improved design for an internally lit sign. Mr. Palmquist noted that signs like Redmond Cleaners, which would not be approved under the suggested Code, can become iconic design elements. He cautioned the creation of Code language that would eliminate the possibility of something unique to happen. He wanted to make sure designers were coming forward with their best efforts.

Ms. Dietz said at the next meeting, massing, height, and setbacks would be discussed with the DRB on May 21. She thanked the DRB members for their time. Mr. Hitzroth said the Gilman Streetscape was an important part of this conversation. He said Gilman was a more historic street than Leary Way. When Redmond was transitioning into becoming a city, Gilman was the spot where the first hotel was located. It was the longest north/south running street in town. Ms. Dietz said the Gilman element was pulled from the packet for this meeting because staff needs to work on its recommendations a bit more. The Gilman Streetscape would likely be discussed at a later meeting. Mr. Krueger said he would like to see staff’s recommendations about Gilman. The DRB took an eight-minute recess at this point.

## **PRE-APPLICATION**

### **LAND-2015-00495, MV Transportation**

**Description:** Bus maintenance building with associated offices, parking and fueling

**Location:** 18795 NE 73<sup>rd</sup> Street

**Architect:** Gregg Percich *with* Jackson/Main Architecture

**Applicant:** Taylor Union Hill LLC

**Staff Contact:** Dennis Lisk, 425-556-2471 or [dwlisk@redmond.gov](mailto:dwlisk@redmond.gov)

Mr. Lisk noted that this was the second pre-application meeting for this project, which is a new bus yard and facility for the operator of the Microsoft Connector service. It is in Southeast Redmond just north of

the FedEx distribution facility and west of the Cadman facility. The applicant is proposing a new two-story building to include office space and areas for servicing vehicles. It would be a metal, industrial-style building with washing facilities inside of it. A separate fueling station would be located to the north of the main building. Mr. Lisk noted that the applicant has changed his design since the last meeting on this project. One previous feature in the design was the use of split-face masonry around the full base of the building. Now, that has been concentrated in the southeast corner of the building where the office would be located. The DRB suggested a darker color to be used on the building at the last meeting. The building is now a dark gray color, but no other changes in color have been provided in the latest design. Staff had expressed concerns at the last meeting about the north face of the building, which was a blank wall. Those concerns have not been addressed in the latest design. Staff made some recommendations about providing an overhang to the roof, which has been provided in the new design. Staff would like to see the trash enclosure area on the west side of the building enclosed to a greater degree using a solid fence, not the chain link proposed.

Kyle Lepper with Jackson/Main Architecture presented on behalf of the applicant. He reviewed the project and its areas for maintenance, storage, and vehicle dispatch. The business end of the building is two stories, and the first story contains the dispatch center and some amenities for the employees. Upstairs, there are office spaces and some rooms for training. The color of the building is now a darker gray rather than the beige presented earlier. The CMU face that wrapped around the entire building has been concentrated on the entry corner, which the DRB suggested at the last meeting. The colors have been inverted from the original proposal between the main building color and the CMU. The DRB suggested awnings or coverings for the office area, and the applicant has done that. Metal paneling now wraps around the front of the building at the main entry. On the west elevation, the applicant felt strongly that an improved enclosure was not necessary. Slats could be included in the chain link, potentially, but this enclosure would not be seen by the public due to extensive landscaping.

The north end of the building was also a concern of the DRB's with regard to modulation. The applicant has added a five-foot landscaping strip here, but other than that, this is a side of the building that is not seen by the public and a blank wall would be acceptable, in the applicant's opinion. He noted that the design has changed considerably in light of the DRB's comments at the last meeting, especially at the main entrance. The applicant showed the DRB the colors and materials that would be used on the project with a colors and materials board. He noted that the new design addressed the windows, as the DRB had requested at the last meeting. The applicant said the new design gave the building more character.

#### **COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD MEMBERS:**

##### Mr. Krueger:

- Said he had problems with a cool color combining with a warm color, such as the cool gray and the warm gray. Mr. Krueger said it appeared these colors could co-exist on this project, however.
- Mr. Krueger liked that the applicant was responding to the DRB's comments at the last meeting and the use of the CMU.
- Regarding the chain link fence, he said a black chain link might be appropriate, if that were the type of fence used. He said the north side of the project would have to be addressed, even if the public could not see it. Mr. Krueger said the staff's recommendations were not onerous, and a simple color change to break up the wall could help provide the modulation needed.

##### Mr. Sutton:

- Asked about the plane of elements near the entry, and if the white panel material had a relationship to the corrugated metal. The applicant said the metal paneling was 18 inches separated from the gray wall, and the gray wall was in the same plane as the CMU. The CMU extends to the other side of the canopy, and it would have a smooth face, as recommended by the DRB.
- Generally, Mr. Sutton said the design was an improvement. He said the metal color could be a bit darker. He said the north side could be painted differently to provide some modulation. Beyond that, he said the entry side looked good and was definitely an improvement.

Mr. Palmquist:

- Liked this iteration of the project and the focus the applicant put on what the DRB had suggested. Mr. Palmquist said he was not as concerned about the north elevation, because the DRB had asked the applicant to focus on the entry side. Mr. Palmquist said anyone seeing the north wall would see the fueling station in the foreground, which would give some visual modulation.
- On the west side, the applicant has a hill on the property, and Mr. Palmquist said the trash enclosure would not be all that visible due to that. He would rather see the applicant focus on the front of the building.
- Mr. Palmquist suggested using garage doors on the project and making the front door a bold color like the MV logo blue. That could make the project pop. He also liked Mr. Sutton's idea of having a darker gray on the metal siding such that the white color on the doors would really show up.
- Mr. Fischer confirmed with the DRB that, in general, the applicant would be clear for an approval at the next meeting.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**IT WAS MOVED BY MR. KRUEGER AND SECONDED BY MR. SUTTON TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:11 P.M. MOTION APPROVED (3-0).**

**June 7, 2015**

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**MINUTES APPROVED ON**

*Susan Trapp*

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**RECORDING SECRETARY**